

May 12, 2006

David Dye
WSDOT Urban Corridors Office Administrator
Wells Fargo Building
999 Third Avenue, Suite 3230
Seattle, WA, 98104

Dear Mr. Dye:

The Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle shares your apparent frustration that Phase Two for SR 519 has languished for so long. This extremely valuable and necessary project is essential to the continued job and business growth that is being generated by Terminal 46 and other industrial business operations in the north Duwamish. To help assure that Phase Two finally gets built, we hope that you and the signatory group will reconsider some of the assumptions referenced in your letter of April 25, 2006.

While we are not among the signatories to the 2000 Memorandum, we are the “community steward” group responsible for supporting implementation of the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center plan that is part of the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan. That planning process was pursued under the mandates of the Washington State Growth Management Act and it identified the SR 519 project as the top transportation priority for the greater Duwamish planning area. Successful completion of the project remains a top priority for our organization and a key to achieving the GMA goal of focusing industrial growth into existing industrial areas already served by existing infrastructure such as the marine terminals, railroad operations and highways that converge in the north Duwamish.

We are deeply concerned that the Massachusetts alternative may become the sole focus of further review. This option will be much more expensive than the original Royal Brougham proposal and it is not clear how - or if - additional funding can be found. Unfortunately, the proposal to focus solely on Massachusetts has also alienated several organizations that are normally strong advocates for freight. How will it be explained to the State Legislature or the voting public that the Massachusetts alternative is a freight project worthy of additional funding when so many freight advocates are presently on the record opposing it?

It is also not clear how the Massachusetts alternative is being prioritized with other freight needs and projects that are also essential to the regional economy and that also aren't funded, such as the Spokane Street Viaduct, the South Park Bridge, State Route 509 and State Route 520. The city's Mercer Street proposal must also be added to this list because it will become a major alternative route for freight in Seattle while the Alaskan Way Viaduct and State Route 99 are constrained or closed as result of viaduct demolition and related construction. The Mercer project also is not funded.

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For those of us who work and live in Seattle, this list must also be extended to account for a half-billion-dollar backlog of unmet street and road maintenance needs that will be the subject of a proposed city tax levy increase next fall.

To add one more unfunded “mega” project to this list requires a greater degree of documentation than presently exists to support the assertion that the Royal Brougham alternative is “not feasible.”

Our organization has received several briefings by SDOT and WSDOT staff stating the reasons why they feel the original Royal Brougham alternative is no longer feasible. If the case against Royal Brougham is that clear, it should be a relatively simple task to document the design issues that are problematic. This approach would provide all parties with the facts necessary to judge which alternative works best for the broader community. Our leadership feels this approach is essential to reestablishing the partnership that’s necessary to bring Phase Two to a successful conclusion and to pursue additional freight projects in our city and the region.

It was widely recognized that it would be difficult to integrate two sports stadiums into an active industrial area. That challenge was articulated in the Greater Duwamish plan and SR 519 was designed - and funded - to meet that challenge. Some look at the north Duwamish and see “change” only in the context of real estate redevelopment opportunities and gentrification. We look at it and see increasing volumes of ship, truck and rail traffic generated by the dramatic growth that is occurring in the Seattle seaport. This activity is larger today than it was when the stadiums were built and it is projected to grow even more in the future. These are among the circumstances that have changed since SR 519 was first proposed and growing freight activity must be recognized in developing a solution that works best for all members of the Duwamish community.

We know that WSDOT is working hard to resolve this issue. Please contact us if the MIC can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Rob Adamson, Co-Chair
Manufacturing Industrial Council

John Odland, Co-Chair
Manufacturing Industrial Council